

**“ANARCHISTIC SPAIN” – IS AN ANARCHISTIC SYSTEM CHANGE POSSIBLE
AFTER THE CORONA CRISIS?
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SPAIN’S DEVELOPMENT**

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Resumo: O presente artigo analisa a probabilidade de haver uma mudança anarquista na Espanha após a crise do COVID 2019-2020. Essa pergunta surge porque é sabido que, em tempos de crise, normalmente são abertos diferentes canais para a mudança do sistema, tal como a reorganização da acumulação de poder. Investigamos se esse é realmente o caso da atual crise. Para fazer isso, a teoria da acumulação e participação de poder por meio de diferentes autores é primeiro analisada, depois o anarquismo é definido e explicado, o COVID-19 também é explicado e, no final da primeira parte, a história da Espanha é examinada brevemente. A metodologia que usamos para responder à pergunta é a análise de causas que ao longo da história levaram a um surto de revoluções. Examinamos as possíveis causas e seus indicadores através das lentes de Pateman, Alperovitz e Melman, bem como o esquema de organização de Louis Gottschalk em relação às causas das revoluções. Diferentes conceitos são considerados, como alienação e participação, por exemplo. Em conclusão, a principal descoberta é que uma mudança no sistema anarquista semelhante ao que ocorreu na Espanha na década de 1930 é improvável devido a razões como a realidade econômica, sociológica e política de hoje. No entanto, diferentes movimentos anarquistas ainda podem ocorrer, como é discutido na seção 5.2 Alternativas a uma revolução.

Palavras-chave: Espanha; Anarquismo; COVID-19; Acumulação de Poder.

Abstract: The present paper analyses how likely an anarchist system change could occur in Spain after the COVID 2019-2020 crisis. This research question arises because we know that in time of crises normally different channels for system change are open, such as the reorganization of power accumulation. We investigate whether this is indeed the case for the present crisis. In order to do this, the theory of power accumulation and participation through different authors is first analyzed, then anarchism is defined and explained, COVID-19 is also explained, and in the end of the first part the history of Spain is briefly examined. The methodology that we use to answer the research question is the analysis of causes that throughout history have led to an outbreak of revolutions. We look at possible causes and their indicators through the lenses of Pateman, Alperovitz and Melman, as well as the scheme of organization of Louis Gottschalk regarding the causes of revolutions. Different concepts are considered such as alienation and participation, for example. In conclusion, the main finding is that an anarchist system change similar to what happened in Spain in the 1930s is unlikely due to reasons such as the economic, sociological and political reality of today. Nevertheless, different anarchist movements can still occur as it is discussed in the section 5.2 Alternatives to a revolution.

Keywords: Spain; Anarchism; COVID-19; Power Accumulation.

Introduction

Over time, the world has often been affected by economic crises, political upheavals and serious illness. Again and again humanity had to get along with these circumstances and develop from them. The year 2020 is another year in which society will have to face a great challenge in the shortest possible time. When the novel COVID-19 virus broke out in the Chinese city of Wuhan in December 2019, it turned the global world upside down. The new coronavirus has literally brought the world to a social and economic standstill, turning the globe into a pandemic zone. Spain is one of the countries most affected by the pandemic. The country registered the first infected in late January. Since then, the number of infected and deaths has continued to increase, causing medical, economic and political concerns in society (Forte, 2020).

Since 15 March, Spain has been in a state of alert, resulting in a nationwide lockdown. At the moment it is difficult to estimate how and whether the situation will worsen or what Spain will look like after the crisis. However, it is a fact that many civil rights have been restricted and very likely that the corona crisis will also have late economic consequences. This is inevitably a social powder keg whose possible explosion is difficult to estimate. Such social structures provide a suitable breeding ground for political system changes. This shall be the subject of this scientific work.

This essay is primarily concerned with anarchism in Spain and looks at whether an anarchist system change might be possible after the impact of the corona crisis. As a means of exemplifying a possible system change, we look at the anarchism of the 1930s and compare whether there are possible parallels in Spanish history.

Based on the assumption that a crisis provides a potential platform for system change in both directions, towards authoritarianism as well as anarchy, and assuming that power can more easily be accumulated by respective groups through revolutionary situations and social movements in crisis situations we want to answer the following research question: To what extent can the coronavirus crisis provide a platform for anarchistic system change in Spain? What parallels can be identified to similar situations in history (e.g. Spanish anarchist movements, Spanish Flu, world financial crisis 1929)?

In order to find an answer to the research question, we firstly provide a short summary of the necessary basics for this topic in chapter 2, i.e. an approach of how power can be accumulated, a definition of anarchism, an overview of Spain's history as well as a short description of the new pandemic virus COVID-19 as a possible impact for a crisis. Afterwards, we provide an approach on how we can answer our research question in the

methodology section in chapter 3. Based on the previous provided background information in chapter 2 we then give an overview of potential impacts of crises in Spain in chapter 4, both in the case of the current global pandemic situation and in the case of previous crises in history. Based on that overview we evaluate, compare and discuss our main findings in chapter 5 in order to derive an answer to the research question in chapter 6.

Theory and background

The following chapter provides an introduction of important theories and background information for this work. It looks at the idea of anarchism, how power can be accumulated and how participation can work. Furthermore, an overview of the history of Spain is given and the current corona pandemic is outlined.

Power accumulation & participation

In this paper the theories of Seymour Melman, Carole Pateman and Gar Alperovitz are going to be used, in particular to analyze the crises in the past and in the present.

Carole Pateman, in her book *Participation and Democratic Theory*, studies the concept of democracy in depth. Democracy means the power of the people. It represents a system of government where sovereignty is exercised by the *demos*, the citizens. Pateman's study starts with an analysis of the modern approach to the concept of democracy. Indeed, many scholars and many societies actualize what she calls the contemporary theory of democracy, an approach that empties the true meaning of democracy as people's participation in managing collective power. As a result, the contemporary theory of democracy lacks objective criticism and does not present a real fact of holding back the participation theory in political life. Contemporary theories focus on the problem of instability derivative from the power under the people's control. For this reason, scholars of this theory try to create a limit to popular power, and therefore to democracy, by creating structures of government ruled by elites. This contemporary approach to the concept of democracy leads to a lower level of interest and participation of people and an increase in the power of elites and rulers. Instead, Pateman supports the classical theory of democracy (Pateman, 1970). This approach, that goes back to Rousseau's ideas and subsequently developed by Mill and Cole's analysis, has as its fundamental concept the idea that each individual should be directly involved in some form of participation and political decision. Following Pateman, to understand the idea of the participatory society, an extended explanation of the term political is needed. The political sphere does not only represent the national government but concerns all collective decisions.

Considering this, the first level of direct and active participation in political decisions must be the local and work level. Direct involvement creates knowledge and political education, which subsequently lay the foundations for more comprehensible and active participation in the government/national level. In particular, Pateman considers the working sphere as a vital point for the classical theory of democracy (Pateman, 1970).

Similar to Pateman, Gar Alperovitz identifies a new way to create democracy. In his book *What Then Must We Do?*, he uses the examples of some Community-Worker partnerships in the democratized ownership of businesses in the US to show how some forms of participation can promote political accountability in the citizens. To create alternatives, we need to look forward in a new way. Alperovitz argues that decentralization of political decisions can lead to an increase in participation of people in social and political life and accountability. These two elements create a strong democratic society. Accumulation of power by workers is a long-term process of creating alternatives (co-ops, credit-union, NCC, etc.) that need a strategy and planning. The process of changing the system does not always end in a good way and it continues to struggle between the old system and the new one. Also, Alperovitz thinks that in the process of accumulation of power, institutions are needed. For example, he argues that worker unions are organizations for planning and organizing social changes (Alperovitz, 2013, pp. 78–123).

Another important author for considering democracy, participation and the accumulation of power is Seymour Melman. In the book *After Capitalism*, the author tries to create a new type of economy and society. He starts from some flaws of contemporary capitalist society. Melman focuses on the issue of alienation, the process of subtraction of power that makes people powerless. Following Marx's ideas, the capitalist system is based on alienation and accumulation. Real capitalist and real communist systems are based on separation from the decision-making process and production that deprives the workers of real control of their life, with the hierarchy of the decision-making process and the primary role of the state. Also, for Melman, unskilled work and high technology cause a powerful alienation process for workers. The intent of his book is to reveal this process of alienation and to lay the foundations for starting a new discourse on a new model of economy and system (Melman, 2001).

Anarchism

The term anarchism comes from “*anarkhia*”, a Greek word composed of “an = without” + “arkhos = leader”. The term first appeared in the English language in 1642

(Merriam-Webster, 2020). Nevertheless, despite its etymology, anarchism always had constructive elements, objectives and strategies to achieve in order to change society. Anarchism can be understood as the libertarian wing of socialism that emerged from the collective discussions and reflections of the working class (Da Silva, 2013). More often than not the political philosophy, ideology and movement – or some say a way of life – anarchism is perceived and seen by the general public as utopian, chaotic and sometimes violent. Different authors, nevertheless, such as Noam Chomsky and Paul Goodman do not see it that way. According to Chomsky, anarchism can be defined as a tendency in human development that seeks to identify structures of hierarchy, domination and authority that can constrain human development. Anarchism, as a consequence, seeks to subject these unequal structures to reasonable challenge: Justify yourself. Show that you are legitimate (Chomsky, 2013). If these structures of hierarchy and domination cannot meet this challenge, such structures should be dismantled and reconstructed from below. Anarchism, therefore, strives for the free unhindered unfolding of all the individual and social forces in life (Ibid, 2013). For Chomsky, anarchism is power in the hands of the citizenry, which would have the effect of allowing for significantly more control and liberty over one's life. Closely to these ideas, anarchists are often against wage, as they defined it as wage-slavery. They oppose private ownership of the means of production and the wage slavery which is a component of this system of alienated and specialized labor (Ibid, 2013). Furthermore, anarchist criticism of exploitation, coercion, alienation has always had as a backdrop a critique of domination in general, including class domination and the domination of gender, race and between countries or peoples (imperialism and power relations) (Corrêa, 2019).

Similarly to Chomsky, Goodman used anarchism to write about decentralization, participatory democracy, autonomy, and community. For him, the chief principle of anarchism is not freedom but autonomy. He affirmed that behavior is more graceful, forceful, and discriminating without the intervention of top-down authorities, whether State, collective, democracy, corporate bureaucracy, prison wardens, deans, pre-arranged curricula, or central planning (Goodman, 2010). For Goodman, corporate capitalism, State capitalism, and State communism have all been unacceptable to anarchists, because they trap people and push them around (Ibid, 2010). For these reasons, anarchism has always been suppressed throughout history. Goodman combined inward- and outward-looking components of individual freedom in one phenomenological conception of self-development. For him, *“Decentralization is not lack of order or planning, but a kind of coordination that relies on different motives from top-down direction, standard rules, and extrinsic rewards like salary and status, to provide*

integration and cohesiveness " (Goodman, 2010).

Even though the birth of anarchism is generally perceived to be with Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865), and later with Mikhail Bakunin (1814-1876) as the founder of collectivist anarchism, people used to live in anarchic societies during the prehistory. What differs greatly Karl Marx from Bakunin is the question of conquest or destruction of state power. Peter Kropotkin (1842 - 1921) is also one of the earliest anarchists and influenced anarchism in Spain. He differs from Bakunin with regard to the revolution, for he believed that a final revolutionary effort would be necessary, but he preferred that the State be weakened by peaceful methods, not by violent means.

In the case of the Spanish civil war, and its anarchist movements during the 1930s, two major worker's organizations had an influential impact (also known as classical Spanish anarchism): the CNT - *Confederación Nacional de los Trabajadores*, the Confederation of National Workers, and the FAI - *Federación Anarquista Ibérica*, the Iberian Anarchist Federation. There were, nevertheless, certain critics against those two organizations. Despite the importance of decentralization and the elimination of the State for the anarchists, there was a relative centralization of the exercise of power at the national scale and the conduct of the CNT-FAI policy in relation to collaboration with the State. Thus, the global strategy of CNT and FAI was centered on collaboration with the restoration of the state apparatus. This meant the strengthening of an absolute power structure, which, as soon as it recovered its capacity to act, turned against libertarian experiences. The more they strengthened the state, the more weakened the revolution became (Rodrigues, 2016).

Furthermore, Bakunin and anarchists in general are greatly concerned with liberty. What differs liberty among anarchists and liberals is the fact that for liberals, the liberty of someone finishes when the liberty of the other starts. Whereas for anarchists, the liberty of someone is the extension of the other person's liberty, meaning that one is only free if the other is also free, where there is a free society. Bakunin defines these concepts well when he affirms,

I am a lover of liberty that consists in the development of powers that are in each person; liberty that recognizes no restrictions other than those determined by the laws of our own individual nature, which cannot properly be regarded as restrictions since these laws are not imposed by any outside legislator, but are inherent, forming the basis of our material, intellectual and moral being – they do not limit us but are the immediate conditions of our freedom (Chomsky, 2013).

Throughout history, some anarchists or collective societies have been put in place. Apart from the brief period of the Spanish case, one of the oldest is the collective community

called Kibbutz, in Israel. It began in 1909 and combined utopian ideas with Zionism. Chomsky affirmed that he lived for some time in that society, being a Jew himself (Chomsky, 2013), however, he left that place for he said that part of the citizens in that community is very racist. Michael Bakunin affirmed that an anarchist society cannot survive with religious influence. As he affirmed, "*there cannot be a State without religion. Take the freest States in the world – the United States of America or the Swiss Confederation, for instance – and see what an important part is played in all official discourses by divine Providence, that supreme sanction of all States*" (Bakunin, 1970). There were also other examples where the anarchist movement had influence, such as the case of Manchuria in east Asia, Makhnovia in Ukraine, the Mexican Revolution, and the Paris commune, for example.

The process for a social change to occur advocated by anarchists is based on strategies, such as: 1.) the definition of social classes and the class struggle process; 2.) the belief in the ability of the dominated classes to perform; 3.) the articulation and mobilization of these classes and the permanent stimulus to the formation and growth of their social strength; 4.) the establishment of a self-managing power, with its respective regulatory and control structures (Corrêa, 2012). Therefore, even though anarchists are not so naive to think that State power can vanish overnight, they have the will to make the State disappear as quickly as possible. Thus, anarchists use the historical method in an attempt to prove that the society of the future is not an anarchist invention, but the actual product of the hidden effects of past events (Guérin, Chomsky and Klopper, 1970).

In general terms, then, anarchism defends a social transformation based on strategies, which must allow the substitution of a system of domination by a system of self-management that implies high levels of participation (Corrêa, 2012, p. 87). For the activist and researcher anarchist Felipe Corrêa, domination and self-management would be two opposite types of power relations, based on an axis of participation; the more dominating the power, the less participation; the more self-managed, the more participation (Corrêa, 2019).

History of Spain

The Kingdom of Spain has gone through a very diversified history and development (Payne, 1973). Since, however, only certain aspects of Spanish history are relevant to answer the research question, this chapter focuses on the history and development of Spain from the 20th century to the present.

Like several other European countries, Spain had serious structural problems at the beginning of the 20th century. Spain had limited access to resources, but its population had

almost doubled. Some parts of the country were unplanted and crop yields were low. There were also some economic problems. The existing infrastructure was not sufficiently developed, and Spanish capital was insufficient to industrialize the country. As a result, consumer capacity was low, resulting in state protectionism, which was also very costly and made the country uncompetitive. Consequently, this also led to political problems, which had already existed in the past century, as Spain lost its worldwide political influence and its colonies. The country's supposed main problems lay with the social and trade union movements of the working class, the population was frustrated. The country was at a crossroads on whether it should return to the old forms of government or promote federalism (La Moncloa, 2020).

The following time of crisis, during the 1910s and the 1920s, was characterized by bloody conflicts, the creation of new movements and parties in all political camps, clashes between traditional and progressive ideas, general strikes, failure of constitutional reforms, alternate ascensions to the throne and intervention wars by the Spanish authorities, which the Spanish nation disapproved of. The First World War also led Spain into another mainly economic crisis, although Spain has remained neutral officially. In addition, price increases and a collapsing European market made the country unstable (La Moncloa, 2020).

At the end of the First World War, a devastating pandemic reached Europe, the deadliest in modern history: the Spanish Flu. Although it did not originate in Spain, it was nevertheless Spanish newspapers that were the first in the world which reported it. Researchers disagree on the number of deaths, but it is estimated that 50 million people died and around 500 million people were infected by the end of the pandemic in 1920. The Spanish flu raged in three waves, the first was very mild and the following two very deadly. The highly contagious disease probably reached Spain through Spanish workers who constantly travelled between France and Spain. The total number of deaths in Spain is estimated at 260,000 people. From these, 75 percent died during the second wave, and a majority of these in just one specific month, in October 1918. The Spanish population growth index for 1918 was negative, because mainly young people between 20 and 40 years were affected (Trilla, Trilla and Daer, 2008; Martini *et al.*, 2019).

The years following the tragic First World War were marked by political chaos and austerity, which culminated in a military dictatorship after a coup d'état by General Primo de Rivera. The authoritarianism of Primo de Rivera was based on the common authoritarian ideologies in Europe at that time. Even though he tried to solve several problems of the country, he ended the Moroccan war, and tried to involve the workers' movement in political

decisions, he failed in stabilizing the country. The financial crash of 1930 gave the country ultimately the final push. This again led to power upheavals and revolts. As a result, the left and republicans won the 1931 elections and proclaimed a new democratic republic. The reigning monarch voluntarily went into exile and the monarchy collapsed. (Boyd, 1997b; La Moncloa, 2020)

The new democratic Spanish republic was however simply too fragile and therefore not characterized by stability either. Despite various reforms of the new leadership, such as the agrarian and educational reform and the autonomy of the Basque Country and Catalonia, a further coup could not be prevented. This was mainly due to problems in the military and religious sectors. In the following years, bloody clashes broke out again and right-wing parties and movements gained popularity in elections. When the right-wing parties won a clear majority in new parliamentary elections and thus formed the new government, they reversed all reforms of the old government, which only made the country more unstable. In the next elections in February 1936, a coalition of left-wing parties, the so-called Popular Front, triumphed. This new government revived the reforms suspended by the previous government. Nevertheless, in July 1936, there were military uprisings, which heralded the beginning of the Spanish Civil War. The Spanish Civil War continued until April 1939, splitting the country into two camps and causing tens of thousands of deaths. The Republicans (a coalition of democratically elected parties) and the Nationalists, led by General Francisco Franco, fought relentlessly for Spanish territory. Both parties in the conflict received help from abroad. General Franco received assistance from fascist Germany and Italy and the Republicans received assistance from so-called international brigades. In the end, Franco emerged as the winner of the civil war and established a dictatorship until his death in 1975. (Boyd, 1997a; La Moncloa, 2020)

As this historical outline shows, Spain has been plagued by one crisis after another since the beginning of the 20th century, which not least destabilized the country, made overthrow possible, provided a breeding ground for anarchy and finally ended in a dictatorship.

Today's Spain is a kingdom and the parliamentary monarchy is the form of governance. The head of state is therefore King Felipe VI. The current head of government is Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez Pérez-Castejón and belongs to the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) (Auswärtiges Amt, 2020c). It was not until 1978 that the current constitution came into force and constituted the country as a democratic constitutional state. The king appoints the prime minister after the latter has won the confidence of parliament. The Spanish

parliament is made up of the house of representatives and the senate. The parliament approves the state budget, controls the government, and has a legislative function. Spain has been a member of the United Nations since 1955 and of the EU since 1986. It is also part of the OECD, NATO, G-20, and the Eurozone. It is also important to know that the majority of Hispanics are inclined towards the European Union, as this has brought about the democratization and modernization of the country (Auswärtiges Amt, 2020a; La Moncloa, 2020).

Corona crisis

The current worldwide pandemic was caused by COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2 virus strain), an infectious disease caused by a coronavirus, which can lead to death. Based on the current state of research, the virus first broke out in December 2019 in Wuhan, China, the virus and the disease were unknown before this outbreak (World Health Organization, 2020). During the first few months of 2020, the virus and disease spread quickly throughout the world, probably by air travel. South Korea, Germany, Italy and Spain were among the first to be affected, all with different infection and death rates (Saez *et al.*, 2020). As a result, the World Health Organization officially declared the infection a global pandemic on 11 March 2020 (Repici *et al.*, 2020).

The coronavirus can cause disease in both humans and animals with symptoms such as fever, cough and tiredness (World Health Organization, 2020). According to the current state of research, about 80% of people recover well from the disease without worse consequences, and many only show mild symptoms. However, about one in five people who are infected become seriously ill, with potentially fatal outcomes. Compared to other similar diseases, the infection or reproduction rate of the virus seems very high according to current research due to several reasons. Even people who do not show any noticeable symptoms can be contagious. (Repici *et al.*, 2020; World Health Organization, 2020; Zhou *et al.*, 2020)

The high spread and criticality of the situation showed in the growing numbers of cases and deaths globally. For example, “on April 6, 2020, (...), 1,244,421 confirmed cases of COVID-19 have been reported, including 68,976 deaths with 49,71% of the cases (618,603) and 70,54% of the deaths (48,658) coming from Europe. As of April 6, with 130,759 confirmed cases (10.51% of the world's total number of cases) and 12,418 deaths (18.00% of the world's total of deaths), Spain has become the country with the second-highest number of deaths (after Italy) and number of cases (after United States)” (Saez *et al.*, 2020).

As the disease spread rapidly throughout the world and as it became apparent that it

could not be contained, many countries around the world took measures to control the disease. The countries pursued different strategies. China, for example, took very drastic measures to stop the disease. These measures included strict travel restrictions and quarantine closures of entire regions. The aim of these measures is to reduce the reproduction rate of the virus. Other countries have avoided such measures and have only tried to implement certain containment strategies to slow the spread of the virus, but not to stop it, for example to achieve herd immunity, reduce the burden on the health system or to prevent economic collapse. As a result, many countries have also introduced rules to restrict or close, for example, visits to leisure activities or facilities for daily needs with the goal of “social distancing” to flatten the epidemic curve. In addition, many universities, schools, kindergartens, public institutions, and various employers worldwide have switched to digital ways or closed completely. Among them, on March 14th, 13 days after the outbreak in the country, the Spanish government started regulations to slow down COVID-19. (Saez *et al.*, 2020)

Currently, the state of alert is in force throughout Spain, up to and including 7 June (El País, 2020). To stop the spread of the disease, the Spanish government has restricted freedom of movement in the country. Spanish people are only allowed to buy food or medical products individually. Furthermore, movement in public places has been limited to the minimum. The Spanish borders have been closed since 25 March and are strictly controlled. Air traffic has been reduced to the minimum. Spanish ports are also closed to cruise ships. Since 4 May, all citizens must wear mouth and nose protection in public. In addition, all educational, cultural, leisure and sports facilities throughout Spain are closed until further notice (Auswärtiges Amt, 2020b). The Spanish government implements health measures according to an emergency plan. These measures include, for example, health checks with temperature measurements or domestic quarantine. Throughout the country, hospitals and other health care facilities are heavily overburdened, so medical care is only provided in emergencies (Auswärtiges Amt, 2020b).

Research question and methodology

In this chapter, the research question is illustrated. Further, the description of the methodology, which was applied to find answers for the research question, is delineated.

Research question

The next chapters study the Spanish situation, focusing on crises and the role of anarchism in the society. Our analysis starts from a consideration. Today there are events that

can be linked to the past, for example the economic crisis, or the health crisis due to COVID-19. Following these similarities, the intent of this paper is to assess whether these crises today create a possibility for a new anarchist revolution in Spain or provide alternatives to a revolution. Therefore, following research question was formulated:

To what extent can the corona virus crisis provide a platform for anarchistic system change in Spain? What parallels can be identified to similar situations in history (e.g. Spanish anarchist movements, Spanish Flu, world financial crisis 1929)?

Methodology

In the next chapter, some indicators are analyzed which are closely related to changes in political, economic and social systems. In this part, it will highlight which factors lead to a revolution. As the Latins claimed, "*Historia Magistra Vitae*", history is the teacher of life. The theory used takes lessons from history: study the history, and in particular the history of revolutions, to highlight some common aspects. In this premise, however, an important point should be mentioned. Despite that history repeats itself, it is unique. Time and space are never the same. The past can help us understand our future, but it will never give us certainties about it. The intent of our analysis, to study the past to understand the future, is, therefore, a difficult and not a mathematical point. Nevertheless, this analysis is not useless. This study follows a methodology, combines theory and reality. This allows us to create something really interesting.

In the next steps the theories mentioned above of Pateman, Alperovitz and Melman are used. These theories are the roots of this analysis and the tools to understand the structural crisis in Spain. The first step in the next chapter will be the application of these theories to reality. Following Pateman, the direct participation of citizens in politics and in the decision-making structures will be analyzed. The useful point in Alperovitz's theory for our research, on the other hand, is how the creation of an alternative (such as a revolution) turns out to be a path in continuous evolution with continuous problems. Melman's theory will be used to study the alienation process at the core of capitalist society, in the present as in the past.

With the previous theories of Pateman, Alperovitz and Melman the structural crisis factors will be highlighted. Also, to better understand the causes that lead to revolution, we will use a scheme of organization of events and crisis. In the text *The American Journal of Sociology, causes of revolution* Louis Gottschalk claims that there are three groups of historical causes. The first group of causes is called *Demand* or the malaise/discontent of

individuals and society. To be formed, this *Demand* needs *Provocation* (the unleashed fact that leads to malaise being action) and *Solidified public opinion*. Another group is the *Hope of success*, formed by an *Action program* and *Leadership* (of individuals or associations). The last factor is the *Weakness of conservative forces in the situation* (Gottschalk, 1944).

In the next steps, the events in the past and in the present in Spain are analyzed through the theories of Pateman, Melman and Alperovitz, also with the help of the organization scheme of Louis Gottschalk to better understand the historical events.

Impact of crises on Spain

The fourth chapter provides information on the impact of crises on Spain both today and in the past. It also shows how the Spanish anarchy movement has changed over time. This illustration is important for a potential comparison in the next chapter.

Spain in the past – impact of previous crises

The first points of the analysis concern the structural system crisis in the past and the relationship of them with the theories of Pateman, Alperovitz and Melman.

Starting from Pateman's theory, we can highlight how the lack of a direct participatory democracy system in the 1930s caused two things. First, it has emptied the sense of the role of the Spanish state and its institutions. Second, it has pushed people away from democracy and the government system. This powered the sense of estrangement and the need for local decision realities separate and decentralized from the central state, following also the strong sense of autonomy of some Spanish regions. Although her book “Participation and Democracy Theory” focuses on democratic systems we can use some arguments even if the Spanish model of the 30s was not a democracy, Pateman's theory allows us to understand another idea. It is indeed possible to see how the general principle of the government system in the past was the maintenance and the stability of the central power of the elites (Pateman, 1970, pp. 1–3). Pateman speaks in particular about the concepts of political instability derived from the power exercised by the people. In this case the lack of a real democratic participation can represent a cause of the revolution

Another point of interest for the study of the history of the Spanish anarchist revolution can be considered in Alperovitz's (2013) theory. In the book *What then must we do?*, Alperovitz shows through examples how the creation of alternatives is a long, tortuous path, made of changes that most of the time fails but that other times can create a lasting alternative. Spanish history in the 30s shows us just that. Alternative forces, social movements and

opposition leftist parties that unite (San Sebastian Pact) are able to dismantle an old system (and thus led to the creation of the Republic between 1931 and 1936). But as mentioned above this was not enough. In fact, the Spanish Republic ended in 1936.

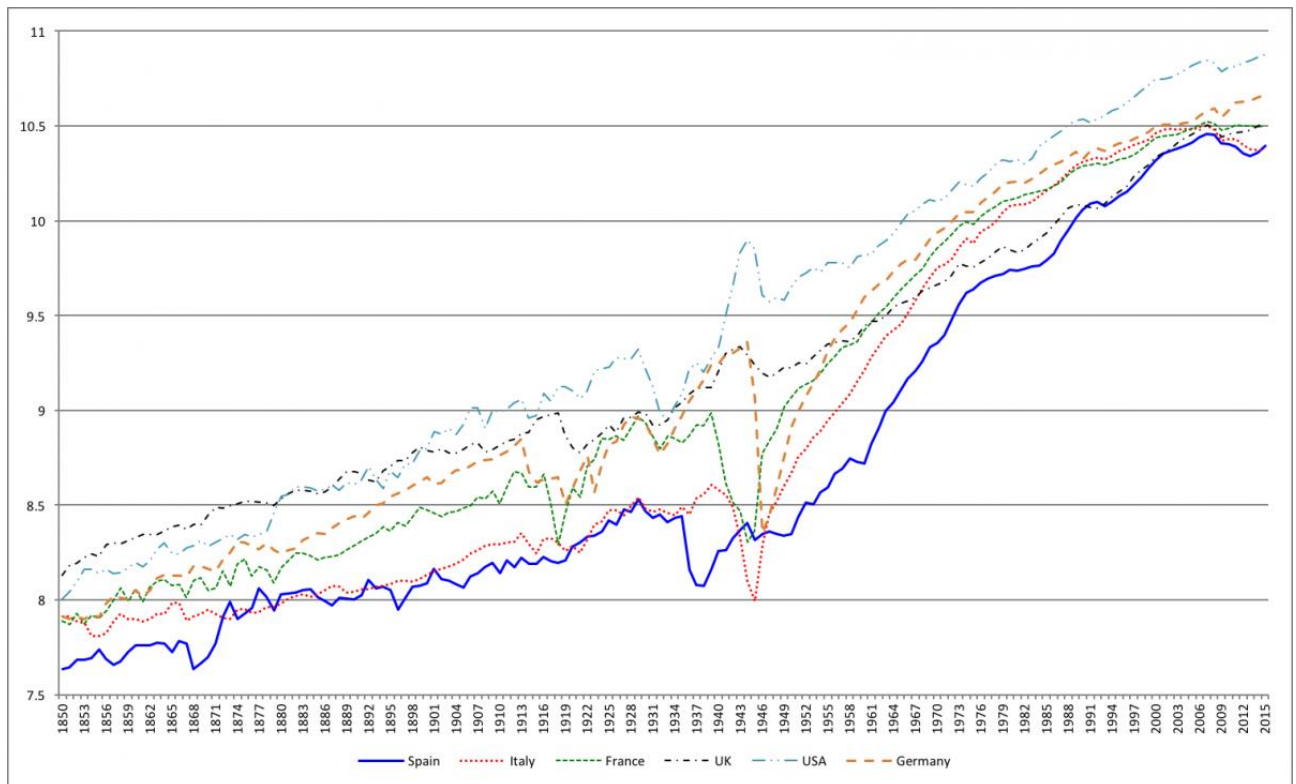
Melman's (2001) theory is also interesting for analyzing the situation in Spain in the 1930s. Melman focuses on the alienation factor. It is clear how in those years, the Spanish peasants and workers felt the oppression of a distant, centralized system controlled by bankers, entrepreneurs, churchmen, soldiers and politicians who asserted their interests against those of the Spanish population.

These theories represent the basis of Spain's structural crisis in the 1930s. Now it is necessary to investigate the historical causes that led to the revolution. Following the structure of table 1, which provides a comparison of Spain in the past and today, as depicted in chapter 5, the main causes divided into three groups will be represented.

The first cause of the Spanish revolution is the discontent of the population towards an unstable situation (1.b Demand - Solidified public opinion). In the 1930s Spain was mainly an agrarian country with a low level of industrialization and high inequality. The agrarian sector employed over 50% of the population in the 1920s and in 1930 only the 20% of the population worked in the industrial sector (in the 1860 in the UK workers in the industrial sector were 60%) (Hermet, 1996; Prados de la Escosura, 2003). We must also consider two international events that affected the Spanish situation, the First World War and the Spanish flu. Spain did not take part in the Great War. The initial economic push due to trade with France and the United Kingdom led to an economic growth. Yet American aid to the two European states threw Spain into an overproduction crisis. Unemployment grew long after the First World War, and labor unrest reached very high limits, with the rise of unionism by the CNT (Montagut, 2016). The second international fact is the Spanish flu pandemic. Similarly to what is happening with COVID-19, an impressive pandemic called Spanish Flu (1918-1920) that caused the death of more than 50 million people during the 1920s occurred worldwide. In Spain alone, there were over 200,000 people dead, which meant around 1% of the Spanish population at the time (AEP, 2018). Furthermore, the economic impact of a pandemic can be measured by the direct effect of demand and supply. Examples can be the percentages and number of unemployment, production levels, or a general decrease of demand by the population, among others. Regarding the unemployment levels, the Spanish flu impacted young workers more severely, and especially workers that were in a disadvantaged socioeconomic stratum. However, most of the evidence indicates that the economic effects of the 1918 pandemic influence were short-term in Spain (Garrett, 2007).

The following graph analyzes the GDP of Spain from 1850 to 2015, also compared with the one of Italy, France, UK, USA and Germany. It is possible to notice how the Spanish GDP was lower than the others from 1850 until the end of the twentieth century, a sign of the backwardness of the Spanish economic system. Another point of interest is the capacity of the economy to resist due to the First World War (where Spain did not participate) and to the crisis of the '29. Furthermore, it is noted that in the late 30s the unstable situation led to a sharp drop in the Spanish GDP.

Figure 1: Variation of GDP between 1850 and 2010 of selected countries



Source: *de la Escosura, 2016*

The precarious economic situation of Spain was reflected in a difficult cultural situation with some critical events (1.a Demand – provocation). At the beginning of the new century the Spanish society was very divided. Clergy, bourgeoisie and aristocracy controlled the Spanish system in an authoritarian way. Separated from a geo-economic point of view, with rich and poor regions, Spain suffered from strong political separatism. The Basque Country and Catalonia asked for more and more cultural and political autonomy. The inability of the Spanish system to integrate and represent the different cultures led to the creation of local associations strongly opposed to central power (CTN was born in 1911). The clash

between conservative powers was getting stronger. With the application of the *ley de fugas* in Barcelona in 1920, there were bloody and violent repressions of workers union demonstrations. The violence of the army against demonstrators strongly marked the opinion of citizens. The Primo de Rivera's dictatorship worsened the already tragic situation. Following the fascist model, it reorganized the Spanish party system with a single government party. The dictator also promoted strong relationships with large entrepreneurs and large banks. This led to a crisis in relations with the working class. Moreover, this struggle represents a crisis in relations between the center and the periphery that would continue until the outbreak of the civil war (Hermet, 1996).

Despite the critical situation, the hopes of the Spanish working class for a new system had grown rapidly (2. Hope - Action program – Leadership). At the turn of the centuries, Spain marked some successes for the workers and the poorest classes. In 1911 the CNT was founded. Afterwards, in 1916 the CNT expanded into Andalusia and in 1919 the organization took part in Lenin's Communist International. This was just a start to the strong expansion of the organization. Hopes for a revolution did not stop at the role of unions. In 1931 the crisis that arose from Primo de Rivera's lack of power quickly led to the birth of a Spanish Republic (1931-1936). Also, the instability inside the government and the military power had a big impact on the revolution (3. Weak conservative forces) (Hermet, 1996).

Anarchism in the past – Murray Bookchin and documentaries

This section investigates how anarchism worked in Spain in the past. For this reason, it analyses the book of Murray Bookchin (1978), *The Spanish Anarchists: The heroic years 1868 - 1936* and interviews of Spanish anarchists that participated in the 1936-1939 Spanish civil war. In addition, two history documentaries are analyzed: 1 - *The Spanish Civil War* (Blake and Hart, 1983) and 2 - *Living Utopia* (Gamero, 1997). *Living Utopia* is a historical documentary that interviews around 30 survivors of the Spanish civil war and how they perceived the practice and philosophy of anarchism in Spain. Similarly to what Bakunin affirmed, Miguel Alba, one of the participants of the Spanish civil war, stated that "anarchism is freedom". Many of them stated that the movement at that time started spontaneously, mainly as they say, to defeat the army and the fascists. The principle of solidarity was very present.

Nevertheless, the misery, poverty, illiteracy and inequality that the Spanish population had been facing since the beginning of the industrial revolution until the start of the civil war, had an influence on the anarchist movement. As Bookchin affirms, a backward agrarian

country, faced with the tasks of land reform, industrial development, and the creation of a middle-class democratic state were the main problems of Spain (Bookchin, 1978, p. 32). These problems paved the way for the anarchist ideas. At the same time, the church, the *bourgeoisie* – which was the owner and explorer of vast unproductive lands – the military, and the State did nothing to solve these issues, instead they even protected their interests. The ideas of Bakunin and Peter Kropotkin, therefore, had an impact on the regions of Andalusia and Catalonia.

The first workers society in Spain can be traced back to 1840, more precisely in Barcelona. Already in the 21st century, the anti-authoritarian ideas of Bakunin spread in Spain, over those of Karl Marx. Later, in 1910, CNT was created in Barcelona, and in two decades it had become one of the most important labor organization in Spain with 700,000 affiliates (Gamero, 1997). At the start of the civil war, CNT had over one and a half million members (which represented around 6% of the Spanish population at that time) while the total Spanish population at that time was 24 million. CNT was concerned, among others, with workers self-management, giving power to the workers, and eventually replacing the State (Ibid, 1997). Different crises, such as WWI and the financial crash of 1929 also made the reality of the Spanish workers more difficult because it brought further wealth to the *bourgeoisie*.

According to José Saucedo, most of the Spanish population during the beginning of the 20th century and before had a very unfortunate life, mainly because they did not have enough work. Throughout the documentary, it is noticeable that there were strong philosophical ideas in that anarchist movement. As some anarchists say, they wanted to create, through self-education and raising people's awareness, a free and new world (Gamero, 1997). For them, the anarchist revolution can occur through a revolutionary awareness, understanding first the reality, before changing it. Also, the preponderant role that journals and media communication and publications in general played in spreading anarchist ideas can be perceived. There was a decentralization of communication and more participation. Anarchists journals and newspapers had in 1935 over 20,000 copies in circulation (Gamero, 1997). Through a massive propaganda, CNT had increased its Catalan membership nearly fivefold, leaping from 75,000 in June of 1918 to 350,000 by the end of that year (Bookchin, 1978, p. 176). The influence of the ideas of anarchism, through CNT, happened by media, meetings and propaganda. In order to stop fascism, furthermore, many factories and mines were collectivized.

By 1931 when Spain proclaimed to be a republic, many people went to the streets to

celebrate. Between 1931 and 1936 many *atheneums* (educational centers) were formed with the aim of education and raising people's awareness of anarchism and other social movements, through reading, talking, discussing, writing, debating and through different teaching methods (Gamero, 1997). It was not a revolutionary education but a pacifist, humane and cultured one (Ibid, 1997). Therefore, there were two visions in order for the anarchist and the social change to happen. One vision is through permanent revolution, and the other is to first educate the people and wait for the right time for the revolution.

According to the documentary *The Spanish Civil War*, the increasing negative view that the population had on the Spanish monarchy, under the military dictatorship of Miguel Primo de Rivera, who had been in power since 1923, contributed to the growth of different movements, such as anarchism and republicanism, among others. Despite the proclamation of the second republic in 1931, it was a government that had to deal with different challenges, such as poverty and inequality, due to the 1929 financial crash, among other reasons. The distribution of wealth also was not successful. The failure of policies proposed by the Republican Government (1931-1936) cannot be denied as well. The attempts of Republican governments to significantly change the nature of land (land reform) and labor markets failed because of a combination of weak state capacity and wider organizational ability of the landowners and farmers (Simpson, 2017).

After watching both documentaries, it is possible to notice that the economic reality as well as the great inequality and awful life conditions of the majority of the Spanish workers during the beginning of the 20th century was what made – among other reasons, such as very strong politicization of the Spanish working class through the labor unions – the anarchist movement so powerful, gathering over a million members before the civil war. The spread of anarchists thought of Bakunin and others in the 20th century in certain areas of Spain, such as Catalonia and Andalusia, can be understood as well to be the dawn of the rise of this philosophical thought in the region, culminating, eventually, with the CNT and FAI. As Federica Montseny, an anarchist leader in the 1930s affirmed, *"the constant repression by feudalism, by the all powerful bourgeoisie, by the army, by the pressure of the church, all this has created a constant spirit of rebellion among Spaniards, it has driven them towards ideas of emancipation, towards revolution concepts of society, and of life"* (Blake and Hart, 1983). Bookchin corroborates with the idea when he affirms that Spain had been prepared for Bakunin's theories not only socially, but also intellectually (Bookchin, 1978, p. 31). The anarchist system change that happened in the past cannot be analyzed without looking at the international context as well, with the rise of communist on one side, and the fascist on the

other.

Spain today – impact of recent crises

During the past decade, starting in 2008, Spain has been hit by several crises, influencing the social, economic, and political situation in the country.

After the introduction of Democracy in 1978 and the European Union membership in 1986, different statistics showed a growing economy and overall positive trends for the country. Growing GDP per capita, decreasing household and government debt, falling unemployment rates as well as increased income equality were only some of the various measures showing progress of the country (OECD, 2020). In 2007, the unemployment rate was at 8.2% of the labor force, which was the lowest in the modern history of Spain. However, with the global financial crisis in 2008, Spain was, as many other countries, hit hard. Starting from 2008, a phase of economic recession started with decreasing GDP per capita for the next few years, where only in 2014 the pre-crisis levels of GDP per capita could be reached again. With this economic crisis, various issues arose in Spain. Unemployment skyrocketed until 2013 to 26,1%, especially among young people, income inequality, as measured by the GINI coefficient, rose and government debt was rapidly growing. Austerity measures were implemented in the country and a rescue loan from Eurozone funds for €100 billion was received in 2012 (Badcock, 2012; OECD, 2020). While the economy started slowly recovering after a few years, the crisis has left dissatisfaction in the public (Müller, 2013; Macher, 2018). Due to several factors like increased poverty and loss of existence, as well as political corruption scandals, demonstrations started and a struggle in political power could be observed. New populist parties and movements, with the “Unidas Podemos” as a left-wing party and “VOX” as a right-wing party, emerged and grew rapidly since around 2011 (Badcock, 2012; Nagel, 2014). A power transfer from traditional parties to these populist parties could be observed in the last few years, as in the most recent national elections these two parties reached 25% combined (Unidas Podemos: 10%, VOX: 15%) (Misteli, 2019). The rise of these parties might have been fueled by various factors, for example by the dissatisfaction after the financial crisis or other controversial periods, like the refugee crisis starting around 2015 throughout Europe or Catalonia’s independence referendum in 2017 (Pardo, 2019): on October 1, 2017, the Catalan government held a referendum on its independence, but its legal basis was rejected in advance by the Spanish Constitutional Court. The independence referendum plunged the country into one of the biggest political crises of recent years. Conflicts over autonomous territories in Spain had been going on for years and

escalated during this referendum in demonstrations and counter demonstrations as well as police violence. The Spanish judicial authorities and the police have tried to prevent the referendum, if necessary with the help of the military. According to different articles, several Spaniards are of the opinion that the hard course of the former conservative Prime Minister on this matter has further divided the country. (Badcock, 2012, 2017; Minder, 2018; BBC, 2019)

In a phase of economic recovery since 2014, with new economic growth after the recession and decreasing unemployment rates, a new crisis emerged in the beginning of 2020, as delineated in chapter 2.4, which again hit Spain comparably hard until today: the COVID-19 pandemic, or corona crisis (Federal Foreign Office, 2020). According to several newspapers (e.g. Dombey, 2020), many Spaniards fear for their livelihoods. The crisis has hit the economy hard, with the service sector, including tourism, being particularly affected. Spain is again plagued by rising unemployment, which is only made worse by the crisis. According to Dombey (2020), more than 800,000 people had already lost their jobs until mid of May 2020 caused by the crisis, out of a total working force of around 19 million people. In addition, the government is supporting several more with their income, due to for example necessary part-time work or temporary layoffs. A study published by UniCredit research suggests *“that Spain is set to suffer more from the crisis than any other European economy, estimating a 15.5 per cent decline in gross domestic product this year and a fiscal deficit of 12.5 per cent of GDP”* (Dombey, 2020). Other economists estimate a 10% drop in GDP and production, which is still very high. The Spanish have weathered several crises in their history, but now they fear that the country will not survive the lockdown (Dombey, 2020; Forte, 2020).

Due to these and several other figures, the Spanish government is forcing the EU into so-called "corona bonds", even though the European Union has already made half a billion euros available to support the economy (Johnson, 2020). These "corona bonds" are part of an EU aid package that includes mutual debt. At present, however, the finance ministers of the EU states cannot agree on a common agenda. Spain is currently unable to estimate how high its debt will be. According to Dombey (2020), the OECD estimates that countries will lose two percent of annual growth for every month of the lockdown. What is certain, however, is that the Spanish tax authorities have less room to play with than some other European countries, for example due to the impact of previous crises. The actual level of indebtedness, however, will probably only become apparent when it is possible to estimate how long containment measures to combat corona will have to last and whether there will be another

wave. (Dombey, 2020; Federal Foreign Office, 2020; Forte, 2020)

According to the Financial Times (Dombey, 2020), the Spanish economy is particularly vulnerable to crisis, as 70 per cent of the employees work in small or medium-sized companies. This is well above the European average. Moreover, micro-enterprises are particularly vulnerable if they are outside the financial sector, as micro-enterprises usually employ less than 10 people but account for more than 40 per cent of jobs outside the financial sector. Nevertheless, in the wake of the corona crisis, the Spanish government has tried to avoid increasing public debt compared to other European countries. In the wake of the lockdown, Spain's incumbent prime minister ordered that only systemically important work should be continued to protect the people. According to the lockdown, all companies are still obliged to continue to pay their employees' salaries, but the workers must complete the lost working hours by the end of the year. Also, the credit line of 100 billion euros for the rescue of Spanish companies is far below the European average. Where other countries, such as Germany, promise their companies rescue loans without cover, Spain has kept a close eye on its public debt. According to Prime Minister Sánchez, Spain cannot afford to run up more debt as it is still recovering from the last financial crisis and is therefore calling on the EU for a plan similar to the Marshall Plan to rebuild the European economy. In fact, the last crisis has already led to wage cuts and bank bailouts. This whole situation is of course also leading to political tensions that are only exacerbating the consequences of the global financial crisis and putting Spain's relations with Europe to the test. Spain's economy urgently needs to recover and be rebuilt, which seems to require EU funding (Dombey, 2020).

Development of anarchism in Spain – anarchism today

In the previous chapter, the analysis was focused on the theory of anarchism and the history of anarchism in the past, in particular during the first decades of the twentieth century in Spain. In a seminar at the Palacký University Olomouc in the Czech Republic, Noam Chomsky said that defining anarchism and explaining what it is (and in general all the concept of political discourse like capitalism and socialism) in a rigid and immutable way is impossible (Chomsky, 2014). In this event he said that real anarchism is “not a specific set of doctrines” but a “tendency of human thought and action” that allows us to see the structures of power, and is the solution to recognize anarchism today in our society (Chomsky, 2014).

Two main events had reshaped the classical approach of anarchism, from the old *modus operandi* of the 30s to the current one of the new Millennium. First, the modern processes, like globalization and decolonization, have changed societies, states and structures

all over the world. Second, the devastating events of the past, like the Spanish Civil War, World War II and the rise of the totalitarian regime, have reduced the violent and revolutionary character of the political movement.

According to Chomsky, nowadays anarchism is the sensibilities of people to seek authoritarian domination. Intellectuals, political activists, philosophers and artists like Bertrand Russell, Herbert Read, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Buber, Albert Camus, Michel Foucault and Paul Goodman are part of contemporary anarchism. They showed how structures of power undermine the freedom of people. The new anarchism has, however, been enriched not only by important intellectuals but also from normal people (Esenwein, 2004).

Spain's strong propensity for anarchism has not disappeared over time. As we have already seen, anarchism has changed in recent decades. The Spanish transition from totalitarianism to democracy has brought about strong changes. Considering the CNL, the workers' union was divided into two groups: the CNT/AIT and the CGT. The CGT (*Confederación General Trabajo*) represents the true heir of the CNT. Today CGT defines itself as an association of people who try to change the malfunctioning society based on poverty, inequalities and injustices (CGT, 2007). The CGT's participants bitterly criticize the government reforms and also the subordinate role of the major unions (CGT, 2007). In 2018 the General Secretary of the organization declared that the number of members is 100,000. According to him, the CGT represents an important force in the Spanish context (Pascual, 2018), considering that the two largest workers' unions each have just under a million members. In 2018 CGT had around 7,000 trade union delegates in companies and state organizations around Spain.

For this analysis, we decided to interview Juan Cruz, an exponent of the Anselmo Lorenzo Foundation, that tries to convey the historical and cultural heritage of the CNT, the anarchist union (Cruz, 2020). The first point of analysis of our interview is how there is a huge difference between the anarchism of the past, represented by the CNT, and the current anarchism in Spain. Second, the impossibility to replace the same situation and to re-create an anarchist society. Third, the important role of the independent organization to promote a free knowledge of the anarchist history in Spain. In the view of the Foundation, it is not possible to have truly free knowledge from any institution dependent on the State. Finally, we asked the biggest barriers to the change in the Spanish system. Following his ideas, the barriers are always the same as in the past. In the local level, the barriers are individualism, the lack of class consciousness and delegation of power to parties. In the international context, the power of the elites and the large companies unbalanced in comparison with the power of

workers unions (Cruz, 2020).

The presence of what can be called a strong legacy of Spanish historical anarchism does not stop at the trade unions only.

Comparison and discussion of Spain's development

In order to answer the research question “*To what extent can the coronavirus crisis provide a platform for anarchistic system change in Spain? What parallels can be identified to similar situations in history?*”, we set the foundation by describing several aspects of the country's character, as seen in chapter 4, to get a clearer picture of the current and former Spain. The aim of this chapter is to compare, evaluate and discuss the previously identified indicators and to find possible parallels based on the chosen theories to answer the research question. In chapter 5.1, we focus on an analysis of whether a revolution-based system change by anarchist movements seems possible in Spain today, as an extreme form of system change towards anarchism. As delineated in more detail in chapter 5.1 below, we overall conclude that such a revolution seems not very likely at the moment. We therefore use theories of Melman, Alperovitz and Pateman in chapter 5.2 to analyze whether alternatives to the extreme form of a revolution exist, and provide an example with the Mondragon experience.

Potential for an anarchistic system change through revolution

In chapters 4.1 and 4.2, we explained, based on theories from Pateman, Alperovitz and Melman and organized by Gottschalk's framework on causes for a revolution, potential reasons for the anarchistic system change of Spain in the 1930s (referenced to as “historical Spain” or “Spain in the past” in the following). We specifically used three main criteria, in accordance with our methodology described in chapter 3: demand, hope and weakness of conservative forces. Based on different indicators for these criteria and our analysis of Spain today in chapters 4.3 and 4.4, we compare these two situations in the following, again organized by Gottschalk's framework, as summarized in table 1 below.

The first question is whether there is *demand* for a revolution or system change, derived from the existence of provocation and a solidified public opinion. Today's Spain was and still is suffering from the last economic crisis and was now again hit hard by the corona crisis, with expected recessions, increased gaps between rich and poor and increased unemployment rates. Similar to the situation in the past, a global pandemic and health crisis falls into periods of economic weakness, putting further strains on the economy and society. Furthermore, political movements towards both left- and right-wing populist parties imply

that many people might be dissatisfied or disagreeing with the politics. In addition, and again similar to the past, a cultural division between different regions could be noted in recent years, as is particularly evident in the Catalanian independence movements, leading to the referendum in 2017. It could even be argued that the partly excessive police involvement surrounding this referendum could be seen as provocation of specific cultural and regional groups. In comparison, the cultural and military repression of the population and the establishment of a military dictatorship in historical Spain provoked the cry for revolution. Thus, when comparing these two phases, it would be hard to argue that there is the same level of provocation through repressive actions by the government or central forces at the moment, which would foster demand for a system change. It is, however, hard to predict which political "provocations" the COVID-19 measures restricting civil rights will have on the country in the long term, as well as the consequences of the dispute in Catalonia on the independence referendum. Thus, overall it can be argued whether the impact of the crises nowadays are impactful enough to society and the economy to create demand for a system change. While above mentioned tendencies share some similarities, potentially creating a basis for demand for a system change in the long term, it seems, however, not be the same level of demand for a system change compared to historical Spain, at least today.

The second criteria shows a clearer picture, and has therefore a high significance for our overall evaluation: the current anarchy movement in Spain is very weak and they neither have a strong leadership nor a strong action plan, as depicted in chapter 4.4. Even if there have been mass protests against the authorities after the global economic crisis in 2008 and political movements have developed out of this, it can still be said that these events are not sufficient to define that there is a *hope* for an anarchistic system change, especially since many of these protest movements have ended up in political parties or have gathered in new parties and thus actually support the existing system rather than weaken it. There is only limited power put into social movements towards an anarchistic change. This is in contrast to historical Spain, where a possible left-wing alternative association had the ability to govern and, perhaps more importantly, the CNT and other trade unions played an active role in oppositional society and called for self-management, among other things.

In addition, the *conservative forces* in historical Spain were very weak after the various crises. There were power struggles within the military, there was a lack of coordination of the conservative powers such as the church or the economy, and also of the military. Nowadays, the situation is to some extent quite the opposite. As the example of Catalonia showed, the central government in Madrid was not afraid to address the

independence referendum with police resources and, if necessary, with military action, showing the strength of conservative forces in difficult situations. Even though different political movements, especially towards left and the right wing populist parties, are growing and dividing the political spectrum, which could on the one hand be seen as weakening the conservative forces, on the other hand they promote a pluralistic society, especially since these groups also participate in political discourse and in parliament.

In summary, Spain has been in and through crises in the last decades (potentially influencing the *demand* for a system change), however, there is currently no strong anarchist movement inside or outside the existing system (*hope*), and furthermore, the existing institutions such as the government or, in general, the Spanish state are not weak to impose their power, when compared to historical Spain (*weakness of conservative forces*). This leads us to the conclusion that there is currently very likely no sufficient basis for an anarchist system change through revolution in Spain.

Table 1 Comparison of potential causes for a system change in Spain today and in the past

Potential Causes of revolution	Indicators for revolution in historical Spain	Indicators for revolution in Spain today
1.a Demand – Provocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural and military repression of the central government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COVID-19 containment measures Region-specific measures (Catalonia), partially with police enforcement
1.b Demand - Solidified Public Opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The important role of bankers, elites and businessmen in the central government Agricultural system that causes poverty and backwardness Overproduction crisis from the WWI Health crisis (Spanish Flu) Cultural division (between social class and between geopolitical region) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After progress in 90' and 00', huge incline of unemployment and economic recession from 2008 Gap between poor and rich growing Cultural division between regions Recovering economy hit by new crisis: COVID-19 (health crisis)
2. Hope - Action Program & Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The existence of a possible left alternative able to govern. (San Sebastian Pact: pact of between leftist organization) Active role in the opposition of organizations (in particular CNT and other workers union) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political movements towards extremists (both left- and right-wing) implying a divided political spectrum Catalonian referendum shows split between regions, but central government showed power and considered usage of military forces to resolve
3. Weakness of Conservative Forces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Struggles within the military sector Lack of coordination of conservative forces (church, entrepreneurs, army) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political movements towards extremists (both left- and right-wing) implying a divided political spectrum, however in the last years trend towards right-wing parties Catalonian referendum shows split in regions, but central government showed power and considered usage of military forces to resolve conflicts

Sources: This table is a summary of information provided through chapters 4.1 to 4.4, please see corresponding chapters for detailed information about the sources.

Alternatives to a revolution

From this analysis it can be comprehended that an anarchist revolution in Spain today is very difficult (not impossible, as already said, the future cannot be known). Today forces able to recreate an anarchist experience like in the 30s are not present.

Yet the actual situation in Spain is unstable. This instability does not only reside in Spain but is part of many economies and societies. However, even if capitalism has created

progress, issues as poverty, crisis and inequality are perpetuated. This is an intrinsic problem in the economic social system of today.

If the violent anarchist alternative (similar to the 1930s) is no longer possible, other alternatives may exist. For Antonio Gramsci, an Italian political philosopher, there is a need to find alternatives, to look forward in a new way (Alperovitz, 2013, pp. 118–123). In the introductory part of this analysis some theories have been presented regarding democratic participation, accumulation of power, alienation and alternatives to power schemes. These are the theories of Pateman, Alperovitz and Melman. In this part we will take some central points of these theories and see how it is possible to implement them through a virtuous example of alternative organization in Spain.

There is no need to imagine unreal and imaginary companies because in fact there is already a real and active alternative in the Spanish context. Mondragon represents a company that embodies (or attempts) the cardinal principles of social economic alternatives. Mondragon is also a clear example of how anarchism is present in Spain today.

The company was founded in the 50s in the Basque town of Mondragon by Jose Maria Arizmendiarieta, a young priest. It is a co-operative workers' self-management organization that inside has at the same level small business and is a big chain company with employees all around the world. Since the foundation, the Mondragon network of cooperatives has uninterruptedly expanded. In 2015 the group counted more than 74,000 workers and €12.5 billion in annual revenue (Mondragon, 2015). Arizmendiarieta's initial purpose was to promote education and employment in the Basque Country. In 1943 he founded the technical training school and in 1948 a local cultural association was linked to the school. In 1956 workers and students created the first industrial cooperative. Quickly the number of cooperatives and the number of workers started to grow. Two years after the creation of the first cooperative, in 1958, the organization provided a social provision system and the next year a cooperative savings bank and a credit institution. Organization inside the Mondragon network has changed during the time to adapt to different situations. However, from the late 70s, there are some main unchangeable structures. There are a variety of bodies inside the group, for example: governing council, management council, social council, and monitoring commission. At the top of them there is the General Assembly composed by all the cooperatives and that is based on the idea of "one vote - one member". In 1987 the Mondragon group defined for the first time the organization's ideas and philosophy: free membership; democratic organization (one vote - one member); sovereignty of labor; capital as an instrument that should be subordinated to labor; self-management; pay solidarity (fair and

equitable return for labor); inter-cooperation; social transformation, justice, and solidarity; universalism and the search for peace, justice, and development of the international cooperative movement; education. “These ten principles have been enshrined as the movement’s founding values” (Barandiaran and Lezaun, 2017).

But not everything is shining. The Mondragon example shows some weaknesses. With the internationalization of the group in the 1980s Mondragon needed to face new challenges. For example, some cooperatives that used their workers in the same way as capitalist companies joined the network, especially in Brazil, China and the Czech Republic. To solve these problems the group has promoted the adoption of its Corporate Management Model by the affiliated and subsidiary companies (Barandiaran and Lezaun, 2017). Following the ideas of Alperovitz, these new forms of ownership are important not only for themselves but also in a long-term vision for switching to a new vision and a new alternative system (Alperovitz, 2013, pp. 118–123). The impact of Mondragon can be seen also overseas, in Europe and America. For instance, it has reached the attention of some members of the US Congress and the White House (Whyte and Whyte, 1988). The Mondragon example of the success of how it is possible to form a new type of organization that removes the old authoritarian failure scheme of domination. This part is necessary to understand what anarchism is in Spain today. It is necessary, however, to underline that as Chomsky claims: anarchism is an ongoing discourse that continues to bring new offers, “no one can say what anarchism can move” (Chomsky, 2014).

Conclusion and outlook

Within this essay, we analyzed, based on different theories, criteria and indicators, whether the corona crisis could set the foundation for an anarchistic system change in Spain. We identified certain similarities between Spain today and Spain during the first half of the 20th century, as in both cases an enormous health crisis hit the country in phases of economic weakness. Furthermore, as in the past, Spain today shows tendencies towards political and regional division in the country. We concluded, however, that a system change towards anarchism through revolution is currently not likely. One of our main reasons is that there are currently no strong anarchist movements in Spain. Instead, political power through social movements seems to be transferred to growing left- and right-wing parties, rather than towards anarchist movements. As an alternative to a revolution, we depicted the Mondragon Corporation as a social economic alternative and a clear example of how anarchism is present

in Spain today.

It should be noted that Spain has not left the phase of crisis behind at the moment, Spain is still in a state of alert. The overall and long-term implications of the corona crisis can only be guessed and estimated at the moment, so it is hard to predict whether this will lead to some kind of system change or revolution in the future, even if not an anarchistic one. As we can currently see in the news from the USA, revolutionary tendencies can erupt quickly during times of tension, and protests regarding corona measures seem to be growing currently in Spain. Thus, future analysis in this area could for example have a look at potential for other forms of system change in Spain and reevaluate the situation in the near future based on the

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Appendix

Interview Protocol with Anselmo Lorenzo Foundation (Juan Cruz)

1. What does your organization do and what does it stand for?

A.: The Anselmo Lorenzo Foundation is a cultural foundation that aims to conserve and disseminate the documentary heritage of the Confederation National Labor Office (CNT).

2. How different was Spain during the 1930s from the current Spain that paved the way for anarchist movements?

A.: The libertarian movement of the 30s was composed, fundamentally, by manual workers who developed their labor lives in the context of a country (Spain) with a very strong concentration of wealth and labor legislation that favored exploitation.

3. How strong was the anarchist movement during the 1930s compared to today? What intermediaries (such as the State, the church, the military, etc.) corroborated for this movement?

A.: The anarchist and anarcho-sindicalist movement in the Spain of the 1930s has nothing to do with today. The CNT was a union organization that brought together most of the workers unionized in Spain and had hundreds of unions scattered throughout Spain. The libertarian movement, moreover, was endowed with hundreds of libertarian athenaeums, newspapers and a social and cultural fabric that made a counterbalance to the hegemonic power of the Church, the State and Capital.

4. Do you think it is possible, after the COVID-19 crisis, to have an anarchist movement similar to the one that occurred during the Spanish civil war? why?

A.: No. The situation of the libertarian movement has nothing to do with it. It is currently a minority, compared to that of the 1930s.

5. How did World War I and the financial collapse of 1929 affect power and anarchist movements?

A.: I'm not a specialist in this topic, so I don't think my opinion is valid. In any case, Spain did not participate in the First World War. The financial collapse of 1929 was felt in Spain, but I think its consequences did not have much to do with the gradual strengthening of the libertarian movement organizations.

6. What institution in society is responsible for Spanish citizens to learn about anarchist movements?

A.: I do not think that to any institution dependent on the State, the political or economic power corresponds to promote knowledge of the libertarian movement, because it is the enemy of all these institutions and power. Improving knowledge of the libertarian movement, its ideas, history and organizational strategies correspond, first of all, to the organizations of the libertarian movement and to groups, the media, etc. linked to this movement.

7. What are the biggest barriers to general change in the system in Spain? How does it compare to the past?

A.: For me the barriers are still the same as always. If we understand the social change in the key of improvement for workers, I think the biggest barrier is, on the one hand, individualism and the lack of class consciousness. On the other hand, delegationism also influence the political parties. In the international context, the power of the economic elite and large companies is still diametrically superior to that of organizations interested in a social change favorable to the social majority. That power was not so unbalanced in times of past, since, in comparison, the workers' organizations were much more powerful, there was much more class consciousness and there was mass media (the workers' press) with a wide profile among popular classes.